

Dan House wrote the following article for the Motorcycle Club & Riding Club Education website.

The "Biker" world has been mine for some thirty-five years, from hardcore 1%er's to the new and improved "Riding Clubs". I've seen and encountered just about everything you can pull from any movie. Being knowledgeable of an element you might encounter is always critical to your safety. Whether it is road rage from a cager (driver of a car) or a robbery at your local Seven-Eleven. You learn what parts of town to stay out of because someone has told you or you learned the hard way. You have the intelligence not to provoke a Pit Bull or stand in the middle of a fire ant mound. You learn to ride a motorcycle safely and so you must learn about the world you have entered. Now, many of you have entered the "Biker" or "Club" world and are not aware of the issues that may affect you and only need a little guidance. It would be my suggestion to do some research on this issue because knowledge is power. It's hard to convey the complete understanding of this culture in a small article but it will help.

This information is to educate you on the outlaw 1%er lifestyle, not to scare you away from riding. (And remember, please think before you respond to anything, don't do any bashing of anyone or any club on the egroups, forums or at any bars.) First off, the likelihood of anyone getting into a scrape with outlaws/1%er's is slim to none unless you frequent their bars or hangouts. But make no mistake, this is very real. Since most bike clubs are "NOT" outlaw clubs, they will have no issue with you as long as you stay out of their "business" and follow biker protocol. There is rarely a problem at a public event or poker run but it is always possible. So lets start with the "Rocker" you hear about. The rocker is in the form of a half moon, for lack of a better term. Similar to the bottom of a rocking chair. If you think about it, you have all seen photos of "Hells Angels" and the way the patches are arched above and below the center patch.

MC (Motorcycle Club) patch and the 1% diamond will also be found on their Cut (also referred to as Rags or Colors).

There are also many other patches some clubs wear that only mean something to that particular club.

The 1% diamond is the key to identifying a 1%er. It is a patch in the shape of a diamond with "1%" on it. That is mostly worn on the left shoulder but is seen on the back of their colors also. They, (1%er's) ride mostly Harley's only, along with their support clubs and almost all outlaw clubs, but that's another story.

Flying a certain style of patch on the back of colors is how the outlaws identify who is or is not claiming territory. Territory is a huge issue and they will fight and/or kill over it if it comes to that. Its just "Business".

The rocker or the bar style patch is not acceptable to 1%er's unless approved by them. And just because an M/C club wears "Rocker" or "Bar" style patch's that doesn't make them an outlaw club. You just have to learn who is who but your officers should have some knowledge on that.

As I said, most clubs are not outlaw clubs and don't wear a top and bottom rocker. **They may have a top rocker but if they have a bottom patch it will not have State, City or County wording on it,** many times it will be the member's road name. Any club in Texas (unless it's grand fathered by the Bandido's) that's not affiliated with Bandidos, (and other than a police club) **are not allowed to fly the "Texas" patch ("Bar" or "Rocker") on the back. They have even forced some police clubs to remove the Texas rocker.** Also, 99% of Bandido support clubs cannot wear Texas on the back. The Bandidos claim that right as an MC (Motorcycle Club) and will aggressively approach you if you are seen wearing it on the back of your colors. Most states have its dominant 1% club where the same rule applies. The Bandidos are the dominant club in Texas as well as several other states. However, they are headquartered in Galveston Texas.

A 1%er overall is also referred to as a 1%er as opposed to an outlaw. Outlaws (not to be confused with the 1% "OUTLAWS" Motorcycle Club) are hard-core clubs NOT wearing a 1% patch but have very close ties with 1%er's.

That would also include any 1% support clubs.

Appearance is important, it would be chaos if everyone wore "Police" uniforms; identification of who you are is

imperative. You would surely be put in jail if you were not a police officer but were wearing the uniform and acting like a

cop. So, on the other end of the spectrum, you don't want to be mistaken for something you're not for safety sake in

all walks of life. Wearing an AMA patch on the front of your colors/vest will identify you (to outlaws) as a family club

member and are of no threat to them. 1%er's push the AMA patch to all clubs because 1%er's and outlaws don't wear

one. Some clubs wear the AMA patch upside down in protest of being forced by 1%er's to wear it.

1%er's and outlaws will have nothing to do with the AMA (American Motorcyclist Association) and vice versa, and will

NEVER wear an AMA patch. The term 1% comes from the AMA. In the 60's, the AMA labeled the "Hells Angels" and

the likes, as making up only 1% of all motorcyclists as being "The Bad Boys".

The Angels adapted that and became

an exclusive 1% club. And ANY club that tried to wear that 1% diamond had better be able to back it up or rival 1%

clubs disbanded them. More often than not they were disbanded, in many cases by death. The term "The Big Four" is

the four largest 1% clubs and the most dangerous clubs in the world.

1. "Bandidos", established 1966 2. "Hells

Angels", established 1948 3. "Outlaws", established 1935 4. "Pagans" established 1959. The club was formed in 1966

in Houston by Donald Eugene Chambers. He saw a T.V. commercial with the Frito Bandido raising hell to sell potato

chips. Chambers calls his club the Bandidos. He even adopts the fat Mexican, machete and pistol welding cartoon

cowboy as the club's colors. The Bandidos, also called the Bandido Nation, is the fastest growing outlaw motorcycle club in the U.S.

There are hundreds of smaller 1% clubs that can be just as dangerous as the big ones on a smaller level. Just a note.

If you are ever around outlaw clubs when they greet each other, you may see some of them kiss each other on the lips. This started back in the 60's when 1%er's used it to shock people when they were around them. It has since evolved into a ritual that is proof of a very tight brotherhood.

To become a 1%er or an outlaw is not an easy task. Not many will ever wear the 1% diamond, and only men can join an outlaw or a 1% club. The prospecting process is more than most men can take or will take. Thus eliminating the possible club invasion of undercover or "Feds" as best they can. It is not generally easy to prospect for any M/C club, especially outlaw clubs. The comment was made about numbers, that the citizen riders outnumber them 50 to 1. That is true, but think what you will, five average guys are sometimes no problem for one hardcore 1%er. If you take on one, you take them all on. For the most part, now days, outlaws will try to stress their position very clearly before resorting to violence.

The "Pagans" are the smallest but some consider the most ruthless of the "Big Four" and located mostly along the east coast mixing it up with "Hells Angels" from time to time. "Pagans" are also known to have very close connections with the Mafia just as many other 1% clubs do. "Pagans" have a 50 to 1 rule. For every 1 of their members you kill, they will kill 50 of yours. It doesn't matter what club, chapter or state that member is from. If they see club colors from the club they are after for the killing of one of theirs, they will get their revenge. That goes for any 1% club that is at war with another club. 1%er's/outlaws have no boundaries, they are very willing, and sometimes do, die or kill and go to

prison for their club. Although with the help of the C.O.C (Confederation of Clubs) tensions have somewhat softened over the years between clubs, occasionally there is still a flair up that will cost some lives. War can break out between clubs without notice.

Rival clubs have killed each for years over things like territory and simple arguments over what seems to be nothing to the average citizen. Outlaw/1%er clubs for the most part keep the violence in the rival Motorcycle Club circle.

Unless you are involved with them or have a death wish and chose to provoke hardcore bikers, the violence rarely spills out into the general public. That still goes on to this day. Declaring WAR is in their eyes just what it means. Last one breathing wins, nothing less, no exceptions, no rules. They have no fear of the consequences, that's what makes them so dangerous in a confrontation. Jail, prison, or death means nothing to them and threats will actually encourage them to strike.

And always be aware of a 1% or outlaw prospect. He will be wearing a prospect patch or have no center patch, or an armband depending on the club. Members and Prospects are expected to behave in such a manner as to avoid discrediting or dishonoring the club, especially, but not only, when wearing colors. But 1% Prospects have been known to provoke trouble. Recognition is important for a prospect to "Patch Out". But negative recognition can sometimes work against a prospect. Their structure is very much like the military and very political, they earn their patch the HARD way and will defend it to the death. If a 1% or outlaw club loses a members colors, they will go to unbelievable lengths to recover them. And God help the one that has them, especially if there is no reason for having them. If the Police have them, they will take the police department to court and get their colors back if they need to. Usually the Police just save themselves the hassle and give them back. They always do get them back.

Until now, the outlaw element has been pretty much on its own. (And as you know they seldom wave at anyone. It is nothing personal and has nothing to do with the bike you ride. They also seldom wave at another outlaw club, and in some cases another chapter of their own.) The reality is, however, that 1%er/outlaws aren't quite like everyone else, it's best to recognize and admit that up front. The outlaws are a society within a society, with their own rules, own codes of conduct, own ways of reacting to the world. It's kinda like the building of a city further out into the wilderness areas. You are going to encounter new forms of life you didn't know existed this close to you until now. Many of you are relatively new to the MC world and are just seeing it. The big bike sales has increased 52% in the last two years putting a tremendous amount of riders on the road, at rally's, and on the web. Most riders paid no attention to 1%ers till they started entering the "Biker" world by flying colors just as 1%er's/outlaws have since bike clubs began. Outlaws, 1%er's, and motorcycle clubs in general have been around since the 30's with some non-outlaw clubs such as the "Gypsy M/C International" that was established in 1932. It's also been said that there was an all female M/C known as the "Metermaids" that was established in 1931. The "Boozefighters" Motorcycle Club was established in 1946. Be as patient and as tolerant as you can when in a situation where you are approached by outlaws. "RESPECT" is what they expect from you and nothing less.

NEVER be macho or show disrespect to outlaws. "People who don't understand the chemistry and the volatility may get themselves into a situation way, way beyond anything they're ready for." That will cause a very explosive situation that no one wants to be in. Even if you don't respect them, it would be in your best interest to show respect at the time of the encounter. Show respect to ANY club you encounter, outlaw or not. There are some great clubs out there and

not all the outlaw clubs are bad. It sometimes comes down to a particular member. Also try and be aware of where your officers are in case something comes up. 1%er's (outlaws) only respond to male Officers of any club. Also, if outlaws are not on their bikes they will not always be flying any colors; it's part of their laws. That makes it difficult to know who is who unless they are wearing a patch shirt that has the name of the club they ride with. So if you are at a cycle event or a biker bar, be careful what you say when talking to a stranger. Even if they look like the kid next door, you just never know.

An outlaw could care less if he goes to jail particularly if he is prospecting. If you make him mad, he will get your attention at any cost. And they don't care WHO you are, an ex-1%er, a "Hells Angel", a cop, an attorney, a body builder or a CEO. It don't matter to them how tough you are or think you are. If you have ticked them off there will be trouble. I want to stress again, it's not likely it will ever happen to you unless you travel those circles or challenge them when they are present. But at least you now have some type of awareness on what to do or not to do, so you are in control of your own actions. It is not always a good idea to approach them even if you are just being friendly. Outlaws are very suspicious of an approach by a stranger. However, some can be very friendly provided you don't ask questions about their "business".

Outlaws can also be a lot of fun to be around, and MAN can they party. Most clubs, including 1%er's rarely give anyone any trouble unless they are provoked, you challenge them, or you show disrespect. I have acquired many outlaw/1%er friends over the years that are great guys and wouldn't cause anyone any trouble as long as they or their brothers aren't messed with. They are the kind of brothers you want beside you if the going gets tough. Once club members consider you a good friend they will try and recruit you to join their club.

The loyalty of brotherhood is the greatest strength of any club or friendship, and the club loyalty's ALWAYS come first. And they won't call the cops; they Take Care Of Business themselves. (You may see that on a patch that some earn.) In fact, history shows that outlaws or 1%er's are less likely to testify against each other than the Mafia is. Not to mention they are certainly a special breed, and the brotherhood is as tight, or tighter than any Mafia. 1%er's have a death code for snitches, if you snitch against the club you will be hunted down. 1%er's are so successful at doing this just recently after a federal agent had infiltrated one of the "Big Four" clubs and gave the feds all the incriminating evidence of murder and drug running conducted by the elite portion of that club. He then committed suicide knowing they would find him at any cost and torture him to death.

"Riding clubs" are, for the most part, the new kids on the block and no matter what anyone thinks, the 1%er's/outlaws will always be here, even when or if the riding craze is over. The greatest law enforcement in the world has had little effect on this type of organization, so you can do little but try and work things out and co-exist peacefully. I think we can ALL co-exist if we keep doing what we are doing. Making smart choices and having friends from all types of clubs. I know there are plenty of "Rights" arguments and debate in what I have written, but what you have read here is very real like it or not. We all have at least one thing in common, "Motorcycles" not to mention close friends! I encourage you all to enjoy this life style by being knowledgeable of it. Learn and realize how dangerous this outlaw organization can be at times. This article has only scratched the surface in regard to the lifestyle or information that is available. And much information is only available when you live in that world. I have listed some clubs in Texas that "some" consider being outlaw clubs. I will list the clubs affiliated with the Bandidos in Texas as part of the "Bandido Nation", I may miss one or two.

(The focus of this article is for informing club members or potential clubs of the outlaw lifestyle.)

Protocol Basics when dealing with Motorcycle Clubs

The following are things to consider if and when you are going to be around motorcycle clubs:

1. Patchholders are people too. They have good and bad days; they have jobs, families, and normal everyday

problems and concerns just like anyone else. There are those who no matter what you say or do, it will not be right

with them. Just like with any group, you will find both good and bad.

2. Protocol and Respect are primary rules when dealing with a motorcycle club patchholder.

If you are introduced to a patchholder, make sure either the person doing the introduction (or you) make sure they

know what club you belong to & if you are an officer, what position you hold.

Under no circumstances do you interrupt

to correct a mistake while that person is introducing you or while they are talking. Wait till the introduction is done &

politely introduce your self correctly. i.e.....

Joe Rider, xxxxxxxxxxxx Riding Club, 1st Officer, Anytown Chapter.

Fred Spokes, Anystate Officer, xxxxxxxxxxxx Riding Club

(Use your name - not your nickname. Nicknames may come later.)

3. Greet them as you would meet anyone else & wait until the offer is made to shake hands. DO NOT interrupt, wait

for them to recognize you. DO NOT be offended or make a big deal if they do not offer to shake your hand. Many

times they want to get to know about you and your club a little better before they will offer to shake your hand.

4. Never, Ever, Lie. You can refuse to answer a question in a polite manner by saying something like, "That seems

like club business, and I would like to refer that to one of our officers in order to get better information for you." Be

prepared to answer questions about what your club is about. Such as:

A.) "We are a riding club & not a motorcycle club and have no intention of ever trying to become a motorcycle club".

B.) The Patch is bought & not earned.

C.) Dues are paid via donations.

D.) All makes and models of motorcycle are welcomed in Wheels of Faith.

E.) We are a non-territorial club.

F.) We are a neutral club and do not wear any MC support patches.

G.) Women riders are welcomed and in many cases are club officers.

H.) We are a riding fellowship of Christian motorcyclists.

J.) Do not offer forum links or web sites, It's better to refer them to a club officer.

K.) Do NOT brag about how large the local or national membership is.

L.) Do not volunteer club info. If they ask a question about the local chapter answer it if you can. If they start asking questions about the number of members, or the National chain of organization refer them to one of the club Officers.

5. Women in leadership positions or being a patchholder in motorcycle clubs, while not totally unheard of, is very rare.

That's just the way it is. Most motorcycle clubs would also rather deal with a man if there is business to conduct. Most

realize what a riding club is about & will for the most part accept a woman as an officer, and a woman officer will most

likely be allowed to attend any meeting. Whether or not they will deal directly with a woman officer or not depends on

the individual motorcycle club/chapter. There is no set rule for this and they will let you know if it's ok with them or not.

Many motorcycle clubs do not care to deal with the National officers. They would prefer to deal with the local or state

representatives.

6. If anyone knows a patchholder, don't let him/her throw the patchholders' name/nickname/club's name around like you're a great buddy of theirs (even if you are). Many clubs consider that as a major disrespect to the whole club.

7. Watch where you are when speaking about them, and never say anything about them in public because you never know when that woman, man, or kid in regular clothes standing near you might be one of them, or a "support

member". Patchholders do not always wear their colors. By the time the story gets back to the top club in your area, it will have been changed many times over and could be blown up way out of proportion.

8. Anything said about them between club members is club business ONLY. If comments, even those said in a joking manner were to get out, problems could start. Discussion outside the privacy of the chapter can start rumors which could cause a lot of problems for not only the chapter, but also for other chapters in and out of the state.

9. If for some reason you have to say something while in public about a motorcycle club, take the person you're talking to aside, alone, and say ONLY what you need to say to get your meaning across. Say as little as possible so anyone else can't overhear it & misunderstand what you're talking about.

10. Watch where you wear your patch (RFs don't wear colors, colors are earned, not bought) and it's just common sense to stay in numbers when wearing the patch. (Some motorcycle clubs can be very territorial and some clubs don't see any difference between a RIDING CLUB and MOTORCYCLE CLUB, good or bad.) If you are unsure of the areas or places normally frequented by motorcycle clubs, find out from your club Officers. If you are planning on traveling and are concerned about what the situation may be in regard to the relationship with the local motorcycle clubs in the areas you'll be traveling through or staying in, talk to your local officer and ask if they can find something out by contacting the officers in the areas you will be in.

11. "SHOW THEM RESPECT." That's A #1 with them! (And worth repeating).

12. If you already know a patchholder, or get to know one in the future, don't just walk up to him/her and interrupt when they are with other members. Wait till he/she acknowledges you first and NEVER touch them or put your arm around them like a buddy. Don't put your hand out to shake theirs; wait for them to extend their hand first. If for some reason you're not acknowledged at all, just keep walking. If you need to talk to an officer of a Motorcycle Club the proper way is to go through the Sgt at Arms or one of the patchholders.

13. You have to decide whether or not you want to show respect by going to any of their functions or if you want to avoid all of them all together. If you do choose to show respect and go, you can do this in a way that may make you feel more at ease by going to one of their "support's" functions instead of the top club's function (if they have a support patch then you're still indirectly showing the top club respect). But if you do go, then you also have to go to their rival clubs' function or you'll be telling everyone that you're not a "NEUTRAL" club as you said you were.

(Example: If you go to the Club A's function then YOU HAVE TO GO to the Club B's function, etc.) You have to decide

how you want to stay neutral, by going or not going and you have to let all the other area chapters know if you're going too, so they're not in the dark and we can ALL stay on top of things.

**** NOTE **** A better way to support them and still give the appearance of being a neutral club is to attend only

"open to the public" events that a motorcycle club may be sponsoring.

If you feel that you do want or need to go to a "limited event", then you'll have to go representing yourself as yourself,

preferably without wearing any patches identifying your club. Remember, if you're wearing your club patch, you are

considered by everyone to be representing your whole club. If anything were to turn sour, then your whole club could

wind up with problems down the road. Also, once the rivals of that club you visited find out (and they will within a day

or two), then those rivals will see you as no longer being neutral & you could be considered a rival of theirs too.

14. No CLB's (Chapter Location Bars), any territory rockers, or anything giving the appearance of a rocker, should be worn with the patch.

15. If someone from a motorcycle club requests that you remove your vest/patch, don't argue. The best reply is, "No

Problem," and then politely take it off and let your Club Officer know what motorcycle club it was so they can deal with

any potential problems. You normally will only get asked once.

16. If an establishment has a sign indicating "No Colors", even though your patch is not considered "colors", the vest

should be removed out of respect to the other clubs and the policy of the establishment. While you may just be a Riding Club, it's only respectful to honor the house rules. Motorcycle clubs that honored the "house rules" would probably be deeply offended that you didn't. Also remember many establishments choose to have this policy and it applies to all clubs that use any kind of patch; they do not distinguish between a MC and a RC. Be aware of the local motorcycle club hangouts & it's best not to wear the RC patch into them without an invitation.

17. Do not wear your Patch into a motorcycle club clubhouse unless you have asked if it's ok to do so or have been invited for a "sit down" with the officers of the motorcycle club, or been invited As a Riding Club Member, to attend a function there.

18. In regard to women who are with a MC club, but not in the club: Old Lady is not a negative or derogatory term; it's just a slang term commonly used. "Property Of" patches are their way of showing support for their man and the club he's in.

19. A patchholder may not, and many times will not, acknowledge your wife or girlfriend, especially upon a first meeting.

20. DO NOT touch or sit on a patchholder's bike unless invited to do so. Do not expect the invitation.

21. A prospect can usually be identified by the back patch they are wearing.

There are many different ways motorcycle clubs identify prospects. They can have the rockers without the main patch. They can actually have a patch saying "PROSPECT". Some do not wear any patch, because all the Patchholders know who the prospects are.

You want to treat a prospect or even someone you suspect is a prospect the same way you would treat a patchholder

- with respect and courtesy.

22. Have absolutely no doubt that a motorcycle club is serious and many have been known to physically educate a person who shows disrespect or displays a bad attitude.

23. Be aware of the behavior and attitude of the other Therefore members who are with you at events. If necessary, try to take action to avoid problems before they happen. For example, if someone appears to be getting too angry or loud and possibly disrespectful, take them aside or suggest going somewhere else until things settle down. You could also let one of the officers of the club know about the situation. If an incident should occur in spite of your efforts when no Officers are present, make sure to let your officers know as soon afterward as you can. If no club officers happen to be there, then ALL of the RC members that are there need to make the attempt to take that person aside, and strongly suggest that the offending RC member go somewhere else to settle down.

24. Be aware that problems created in one part of the country by a RC member or issues with the RC in one area have the potential to affect RC members in other areas and states.

25. The term Brother or Bro has special meaning to a Patchholder, do not call a Patchholder Brother or Bro. Their Brothers are fellow Patchholders and those that have earned that term.

26. Don't ever touch any part of another club member's colors, which includes the vest or jacket it's sewn on. That is considered serious disrespect, which could cause them to aggressively educate the un-informed.